

Shadow

by Crystalgurl101

Category: Hamtaro

Genre: Drama, Romance

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2006-03-28 03:26:41

Updated: 2006-08-20 05:33:51

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:46:48

Rating: T

Chapters: 4

Words: 15,042

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: All her life, Penelope has been overshadowed by her pretty, popular and perfect older sister, Pashmina. Now, all she wants is her own life. CappyPenelope. R&R. Rated T for language. Chapter 3 is now FINALLY updated!

1. Prologue

****Shadow****

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****A/N:** Yaaaaaay! My very first CappyPenelope ficcie!(claps hands happily)Okay, if you're not a big C+P fan, then I suggest you leave b/c I do NOT accept flames from meanies. ******

****FLAMERS SHALL HAVE TO ROAST MY MARSHMALLOWS AND MAKE MY SMORES FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES AS PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR IGNORANCE! Got it? ****

****Disclaimer:** I do not own Hamtaro or any of it's characters--even Stan(cries). I only own Crystal, who might be used in this story, on account Penelope and Cappy are the main characters.******

****Quick 411:** Penelope, Cappy and their classmates are 13-yr-old human-hams. Pashmina, Hamtaro, Bijou and the rest are 16. Boss is 17.******

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>â™¥ <p>Summary: Ever since the day of her birth, Penelope Mafura's lived in the shadows of her pretty, popular and perfect older sister, Pashmina. Now, fed up, all she wants, is her

own life. My first CappyPenelope romance fic.**

Enjoy!

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>Prologue: Fed Up

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I have friends in homeroom who say seventh grade suck. I have older friends in high school who complain detention sucks(mainly the guys). I've heard that people who don't finish college end up with really sucky jobs. In fact, alot of people complain that alot of things in life suck.

But I don't agree with them.

Why?

I'm smart. I can live being a seventh grader.

Detention isn't prison. I wouldn't mind spending the rest of the month in five o' clock detention.

I'm not a bum. I'll finish college. Sucky jobs are for the idiots who decide that college is for losers. Hel-**LOOO?** College is supposedly for making you successful in life. **DUUUUH!**

But you know what really sucks? You wanna know what's worse than seventh grade, detention, prison or any of your worst fears?

What REALLY sucks is when people expect you to be someone you're not. Sometimes, when you're living my life, people expect you to follow someone **else's** footsteps. To live in **their** shadows and be **their** personal dummy. To be perfect.

In people's eyes, perfection is something you're born with. Perfection is a gift you recieve from birth by blood. Like a purebred or something. Well, that's what I must've been born with. Sometimes, you're expected to do alot. At the same time, not much at all.

Perfection.

Sigh.

The meaning of perfection is being on time every day. Keeping an organized schedule. Watch what you eat for a flawless flat stomach. That way, you'll look good in just about anything at the mall **and** being acne's number one enemy. Storing your books in class order, so a visit to your locker is a snap. Owning the cutest curves. Brushing your long, silky hair that almost reaches your waist and with no split ends every night for a knot-free life. Having beautiful blueish eyes and lip-plumping pink gloss for a sweet, yet sexy pout.

To people, that was my perfect older sister. And I was the perfect younger sister. At times, I was the envy of many. Others admired my gift. But to me, it was a curse. I was to do everything she did. Be

just like her. It was pressure. It was daily duty. It was hell.

For years, the pressure pushed me to doing things her way. I tried to do everything to prove I could be the perfect little sister. But every move. Everything I'd think was successful was another mistake to them.

As I got older, the pressure didn't exactly let off.

Things only went from bad to worse.

When I entered my teen years a while ago, everyone suddenly expected me to "look" my part(if you get my meaning). Let's just say they were pretty disappointed.

Just like the pressure, my opinion on being the "perfect" little sister also changed.

It dawned on me that I would ****never ****be Pashmina. No matter how hard I tried. Despite our resemblences. There was only one Pashmina. And only one me. And you know what? It doesn't matter that I will never be like her!

I'm tired of hearing how great Pashmina was.

Or how Pashmina used to do this.

How she did that.

How ****I**** should be ****more**** ****like**** ****Pashmina****.

You wanna know something? I'm sick and tired of all the bullshit! I'm tired of living in Pashmina's shadow and being nothing but her little clone. Everyone has already tried to run my life. So why can't I give it a shot for once? It's ****my ****life!

I'm sick of being Pashmina's look-alike. I've had it with being the world's puppet on a string. I don't wanna lived in a caged world for the rest of my life. I wanna spread my own wings. Fly in my own path. Follow my own directions. I wanna learn from my own mistakes. I wanna breathe the air of independence. I wanna shine with my own colors.

If Christmas were around the corner, I'd wish to step out of Pashmina's shadow and fly off into the rising sun. I'm tired of everything everyone has tried doing for me. I just wanna be my own person. Be me, myself and I. But Santa can't do that for me. If I want something, a shooting star won't do much of anything. I have to depend on me and no one else.

All my life, I've been nothing but a dummy. But soon, I'm gonna change all that. I'm breaking free and flying off. I will no longer be Pashmina's little sister. I will just be...me.

Penelope Alyson Mafura.

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>AN: Prologue complete! I'm sorry if it was a little short, but I promise there's more where that came from! So plzplzplzplzplzplzplzplzplz review(and don't be cruel)if you want more.**

Until then, I'll be waiting! Buh-byez!

Hugs 'n' Kisses,

Crystalgurl101

2. Fed Up!

A/N: Thanks soooooo much you guys! Your reviews for this story AND my one/shots really helped bring my spirits up--on account I'm reallyreallyreally sick today. Which means I couldn't see my friends and my teachers... andtheboyIsecretlyhaveacrushon... today!

(Reviewers: O.O)

**Okay, forget I said that last part. Wh-Why are ya'll giving me those looks? Stop...stop looking a-at me like that! No...wa-w-wait...ummm...I'LL NEVER TELL 'IM! NOW ON WITH THE REVIEW REPLIES! XO **

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>Krispified: OMG! You were the first reviewer? OMG! I...I love your work! This is such an honor! OMG!(I should stop)**

**Ringa Ham: It kinda made me cry a bit too while I was writing...mainly cause I was listening to sad songs...or was it the onions in the kitchen..?*

**Sparkleshine101: How many times do I have to tell you, woman? YOU ARE THE SWEETEST PERSON EVER! Have you even flamed anyone before?*

Yayfulness(is a lazy bum): (:P) Yes! It's THAT story! It's THAT story! Hold your guns PLZ! Or I'll get scared...

Moonshine101: A movie? OMG! And I thought following my dreams of being an actress was good enough for me!(BTW, did you mean "This is gonna be GOOD?" not "god?")THANK FOR REVIEWING!

Wolfenheim: Yes, but all that work was worth it thanks to you guys! Thanks BTW! You've been such a sweetheart to me for the past year.

Mel-Girl: Hey girl! Here's the "more!" you wanted! And Penny'll be FAR from obsessed with helping Pashy(Flames suck).

Tsubaki Munegawa: It's okay if you review late. My life hasn't been any easier either.

****Angel73:** Awwww! Don't worry. Things'll get better for Penny!**

****Cappyandpashy4ever:** LOL. Okay. I'll blame the vacation! Thanx for the review. And BTW, did you have fun on your vacation?**

****_Muchas gracias,_ everyone!** The reviews meant alot to me! Now, for your prize: CHAPTER 1!**

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****Disclaimer:** I don't own Hamtaro. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BY NOW!
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>Chapter 1: Fed Up!

"Hey Penny?"

"Yeah Caps?"

"Why are you so quiet today?" thirteen year old Cappy turned his head towards my direction. We were both laying on the grass in the school lawn, staring at the puffy white clouds in the baby blue sky.

It was early in the morning and school had not started yet. Which meant we had some alone thinking time before the whole learning-thing began. Very few kids were spread out, either awaiting their friends or finishing last night's science homework.

"You didn't answer my question." Cappy told me silently. Cappy was my best friend in the whole wide world. He completely understood me and knew everything about me. I looked over at him blankly.

His bushy milk-chocolate brown hair was once again hanging freely from underneath the green baseball cap he always wore. As usual, the tip was pointed backwards to show his face. He had matching brown eyes that shone in the sunlight and his face was a medium beige. He was a very kind and understanding person and I always loved having him around me.

"I dunno, Cappy. I've just been...thinking." I sighed and told him quietly. "You wanna talk it over?" he offered, leaning on one elbow. "Nah. Maybe at lunchtime, kay?" I asked sweetly. "Sure!" Cappy smiled and nodded. He threw himself onto his back once more and stared at the clouds. I smiled as well and looked up at the clouds.

After a few moments of silence, I felt something poking at me. Mentally that is. Like...like something was staring at me. My eyes glanced to the side and met straight on into Cappy's two brown eyeballs. He quickly looked away, shocked. "Cappy, was there something on my face?" I asked worriedly, stroking my cheek.

"No no! You're perfect..." Cappy shook his head and stared straight up at the sky. "Oh. Okay!" I smiled thankfully and stood up as I heard the warning bell.

Â§ _That afternoon... _Â§

I cringed once again in embarrassment as I replayed this morning over and over again. _Ugh! Why did I just stare at Penny like that? She could've totally busted me!_ I scolded myself.

It was lunchtime and I was waiting patiently for Penelope to come from math class. I was still sort of embarrassed from this morning's events and a bit nervous to face her after what had happened.

Maybe she forgot about it! After all, she's forgetful AND she was worried about her face! I reassured myself. This calmed me down. A bit. I stared up at the ceiling and thought of Penelope and my friendship with her.

Ever since we were little enough to watch Barney--with pride--me and Penelope had leaned on each other whenever we needed the support and help. She always knew what I was feeling from just looking at me and she knew what I liked, disliked, hated and just plain scared of! _CoughBarneycough._

But what confused me was why I had just stared at her like that this morning. After all, nothing had really changed about her. She still had those big pink eyes of her's. The same long honey-blond hair. (**A/N: I know she has brown hair, but you'll see why I changed it later during the story.**) The same giggle. The same smile. No recent tans. The same little growl whenever she was angry. I believe it went like...

**"Ooooooooooooh!"**

Yeah, like that!

"THIS SUCKS!"

BAM!

Suddenly, Penelope slammed her backpack onto the table and sat herself down across from me. I jumped out of my skin and looked at her, surprised. "What? Did I scare you?" she cocked her eyebrow, obviously aggravated about something. "N-No! I was just...waiting, is all!" I lied. _Of course the woman scared me! **What** is in that backpack of her's?_

"Sooo, what are you so pissed about?" I leaned my elbows on the table and looked at her carefully. She was definately not as happy as she was a few hours ago. Well, that's what school does to you. It screws up your day and your good mood.

"This." Penelope dug into her binder and pulled out a sheet of paper. My eyes almost exploded out of my head. "WHOA! You got a D?" I exclaimed. "A D **plus!**" Penelope hissed and removed her thumb from the plus sign. "Oh...right." I blushed and shrank in my seat. _How embarrassing! I'm trying to forget what happened this morning with me and my best friend, and here I am, making this worse!_

"Aren't you gonna ask how I got that D?" Penelope raised an eyebrow. "U-Uh, that's what I was gonna ask you in a few seconds!" I lied. _Jeez! Was I off today!_ I thought. Obviously, it would've occurred to me that a D(plus) was rare for Penelope. She was a very smart person and things like those rarely happened to her.

"Okay, for some wacko reason, I just couldn't concentrate on my test the other day. I had ****every ****answer stuck in my head, and then I blanked out and ended up with this...this...this CRAP! Ooooooh, I'm ****so ****pissed right now!" Penelope grabbed the paper, crumpled it up into a ball and threw it across the table. It landed by my feet.

I frowned sympathetically and picked it up. "Well, can't you take it over?" I asked her, looking at the tight ball in my hand. "****Pfft!** ****Yeah right!**" she glared. "That no-good, evil, superficial, stuck-up, pointy-nosed, fat-hipped old bi--"

"Penelopepeeeeeee? Remember the incident with the principal?" I warned.

"Right." Penelope nodded cautiously. "The old ****witch ****will probably let me retake the test when hell freezes over!" Penelope rephrased. I probably ****shouldn't ****tell you what happened with Penelope, the principal and her foul language issues. It'd be too much for you younger kids to hear.

"But I thought you weren't gonna do this anymore, Pen!" I sighed. "Do what?" Penelope asked. "I thought you said you weren't gonna stress yourself to be just like your sister anymore! You told me you didn't want to try to be 'The perfect little sister' anymore. Remember?" I simplified things for her. "Yeah, but that doesn't mean that slipping my grades down to a ****Z minus**** will separate me from Pashmina!" she whined.

Penelope wasn't the only Mafura child the school had had. Her older sister, Pashmina, had once gone to our school before graduating two years ago and moving on to high school. And not only was she a big impact on little sis, Penelope's life, she had also left a big mark on this school's history.

Pashmina had been a straight A student, a total organizing machine, respectful, **respec**ted****, kind and one of the prettiest and most popular girls in school (for the good reasons, not the superficial, bad-girl, Sparkle ones). It wasn't that Penelope was jealous, but what bothered her was what people thought they saw ****in ****her from just looking at Pashmina.

Since I can remember, Penelope has tried to make people believe she really ****was ****Pashmina's "also perfect little sister." But it just put more pressure on her. So, she decided that pretending to be someone she wasn't from birth, wasn't exactly the best idea. She's been trying to prove those rumors (of her wanting to be just like Pashmina) wrong ever since.

"Okay, you have a point there." I agreed eventually. "Right." Suddenly, Penelope got very quiet. "Penny? Are...are you okay?" I had a very bad feeling that I had just said the wrong thing at the wrong time. "Huh? Umm, yeah. I'm fine." Penelope nodded absent-mindedly. I smiled, amused. "Then, why are you twirling your hair around with a

fork?"

"Heke? What are you--EWWWW!" Penelope screamed as she let her hair go and dropped the fork. "Ohhh, groooooooooooooossssss!" Penelope scrunched up her nose and ran her fingers through the strand of hair, checking for anything not supposedly allowed to be in it. She saw me smirk and blushed furiously. "Okay, so maybe there ****is **something** on my mind!" she snapped. "So, spit it out!" I said.

"Okaaaay..." Penelope looked down sadly. "It's just...I-I...I'm worried." she confessed. "Worried? About what?" I asked. "About me and Pashmina! What if I can't prove to everyone that I'm not Pashmina? What if people think I'm just being rebellious and laugh, like I'm still some kind of child? What if I can't be another type of Mafura?" Penelope let out a little moan and slammed her head on the table.

"Oh come on Pen! You're just overreacting!" I poked at her shoulder. "Am I? Or am I doing myself a favor by speaking the truth?" she mumbled. "No. You're ****not **doing** yourself a favor by doubting yourself!" I said. "Penelope, you're one of the strongest people I've ever known! How can you give up so easily? People like you ****don't **give** up. Ever!"

"Ever?" Penelope picked up her head slightly.

****Ever!****" I repeated.

"I dunno." Penelope slanted her lips to the side and the crease on her forehead grew. "I don't think I can pull it off." she lay her head on the table again. "And why not?" I cocked an eyebrow. "Cause..." Penelope trailed off. "Cause?" I copied her. "Cause..." Penelope tried again. "Cause?" I did the same.

"Cause Pashy's just so...so ****good **at** everything!" she eventually finished. "Oh is she?" I asked sarcastically. ****Yeah!**** She ****is!****" Penelope looked up and nodded her head sharply. ****Pfft!**** Please! Penny, you're her sister. There's gotta be ****something **she's** not so good at! ****Anything!****" I rolled her eyes.

"Afraid not, boy! She's been involved in everything! She was head of the Dance Committee, president of Student Council, she was in the Yearbook Club, manager of the Student Store, had an advice column in the school newspaper called 'Dear Miss Pashmina,' ****and **had** the best designs for the dances, yearbooks, ****and **for** accessories in the Student Store! ****Not **to** mention she was in the Ham-Ham Gang, making her one of the most popular girls in school! Shall I stop or keep going? Cause I have a whole ****novel**** called _'What My Sister Is Good At That I'm Not'_ with lists and everything you know!" Penelope stopped for a breather.

I smiled. ****Hey! **We're** in the Ham-Ham Gang too, you know!" I told her dramatically. "Okay, how is this supposed to make me feel better again?" Penelope folded her arms across her chest. "Okay, you know just about everything Pashmina's ever done.." I began. "And ****succeeded **in!**" she interrupted bitterly.

"..****and**** succeeded in," I rolled my eyes amusedly. "but you can't think of ****one **thing** she's ****never **been** able to do? Ever?" I finished.

"Well...no! Like I said, she's done everything the perfect teenager could've ever done!" Penelope told me. _She has a point, you know!_ my conscience whispered to me. I told it to shut up. I wasn't gonna let Penny give up oh-so-easily.

"Are you sure, Penny? Cause there's no such thing as a human ham with ****zero ****flaws. Everybody has a weakness. Everybody has fears. Everybody has their tramautizing moments. Nobody in this world is 'perfect.' ****Nobody!**** Not even Pashmina Samantha Mafura!"

Â§ _Later that night..._ Â§

That same evening, even after dinner, Cappy's last words from this morning wouldn't leave my head. I closed my eyes and thought them over once more...

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...Nobody in this world is "perfect." ****Nobody!**** Not even Pashmina Samantha Mafura!

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I sighed loudly and threw myself back. My head landed safely on the soft support of the sofa. The ceiling of the living room was all I could see. My hand hung lazily over the cushion and my feet were laying over the edge of the sofa. I was practically dead on the couch, but my mind was swimming over my thoughts faster than any hamster could ever run in her whiz wheel.

Maybe Cappy had a point. Maybe what he was saying was true. Maybe nobody in this world was perfect. Maybe there was something everybody wasn't so good at. I knew I had some imperfections. And after all, Pashmina ****was**** only human ham! She just had to have something that stressed her off. I just had to think.

Think, Penelope Alyson.****** Think! ******You're Pashmina's sister. You just have to know something about her. It can be anything!

While I lay there thinking, Pashmina just then came downstairs. I didn't even realize it until she said hi. I jumped up and said hi back. Then I noticed something was a wee bit different about her.

"Hey! Whatcha doing wearing a different outfit for?" I asked. Sure enough, Pashmina was wearing a white spaghetti-strap shirt, a pink blazer, blue denim capris with a sparkly pink belt, white(not that high)high-heeled sandals and her trademark pink scarf. I was still in the same clothes from school today: A white tee with a yellow swirly sun on it, my favorite yellow cotton T-vest, matching pants and white sneakers.

Pashmina looked away from the mirror and smiled warmly. Sometimes, when people hear that I have a "perfect" older sister, they immedietaly claim that deep down, there's an evil, bitchy little monster underneath all the make-up. But Pashmina's not a stuck-up bitch at all. She's a real sweetheart and has a heart as big as Hamtaro's bushy orange/white hair.

Pashmina treated everyone with respect, which was why she recieved alot of respect and admiration from many girls in my school. She was also loved by Bijou, Sandy, Pepper and Crystal. All four of them, me and Pashmina are the girls of the Ham-Ham Gang. The boys were made up by Hamtaro, Oxnard, Boss, Stan, Howdy, Dexter, Maxwell, Snoozer, Jingle, Panda and of course, Cappy.

We were all the best of friends who did almost everything together and were very known throughout me and Pashmina's schools. Me and Cappy, being the two youngest members, were very close to one another and looked up to the other older ones. Cappy especially looked up to Boss, who was a year older than everyone else **and **the leader of the Ham-Hams.

A couple of other Ham-Hams were also best buds like me and Cappy. Two Ham-Hams that were very close are Stan and Crystal. They met when they were still toddlers and have been inseperable ever since. You can usually see them always goofing off together because they were such troublemakers as kids.

I've even heard rumors from the girls that they might be feeling a little more than just friendship for each other! But I **totally** don't believe that. How can two best friends fall in love with each other anyways? It's impossible. After all, look at me and Cappy!

Another pair of BFF's are Hamtaro and Bijou. Unlike Stan and Crystal, these two are actually dating. They were very good friends before they started dating and their friendship grew even stronger when they began going out. They love to goof off and they talk about alot of things too. They talk alot. Not to mention they're so cute together!

However, being the youngest of such a huge group of teenagers had it's crappy downsides as well. For one, I could never understand their teenage dramas and their attractions towards one another. But the girls recently told me that, because I was now thirteen, I would soon learn what they were they still going through.

"I'm going out with the girls tonight. Sandy actually aced her Italian test and we're off to celebrate." Pashmina told me. It occurred to me that I did overhear that Sandy had been studying for an Italian test all week. Guess it was worth it. After running her fingers through her long straight hair, which was now in a side ponytail, she looked at me curiously.

"So what are you doing tonight?" she asked me. "Oh nothing! I'm just gonna watch endless marathons of dull, play a couple of games of Snore-opoly and then bore myself to sleep!" I chirped sarcastically. Pashmina laughed and sat beside me. "You know, you can **always** come with us!" she advised. I gave her a look of shock **and **confusion.

"I **can?**" But I thought you said I was too young to come along with you guys!" I pointed out. "True. I did say things like that." Pashmina nodded. "But come on! Things have changed. You're thirteen years old. I think it's time we invited you to our little night-outs together!" Pashmina told me.

"Are you sure, Pash?" I cocked my eyebrow doubtfully. "Of course!

Tell you what." Pashmina scooted closer to me. "How about you go out with us tomorrow night for a girl's night-out? We can talk and shop and do everything. Woman-to-woman. It'll be fun and the girls will be thrilled!" Pashmina offered. "Really?" I perked up. "Sure! After all, you're now an adolescent. Practically one of us!" Pashmina nodded.

Just hearing those words come out of Pashy's mouth made my heart go on overdrive. I couldn't believe that I could finally join Pashmina in her teens-only nights. It was like she just unlocked a door and I was stepping out into a whole new world. Suddenly, my old preteen world seemed very, very small compared to my sister's big offer.

"Well...it **is** Friday tomorrow. And I don't have homework on Fridays." I pretended to think it over, trying my best to contain my excitement. "Okay! Let's go!" I smiled and nodded. "Yes! The girls'll be **so excited** when I tell them!" she squealed.

Beep beep!

"Ooh! That's them!" Pashmina stood up quickly. She straightened up her outfit and checked her ponytail one last time. "Okay, Penny. I'll be sure to tell them okay?" she told me. "Yeah yeah. Okay, just go already!" I waved her away teasingly. She laughed, grabbed the keys to our house, her purse, her cell and ran for the door.

Then, it hit me.

If I'm hanging out with Pashmina more and more often than I usually am, then not only am I gonna feel more mature and grown-up, I might actually **learn some** things about her that I haven't bothered to find out--including things she isn't good at!

This is genius! I thought to myself. That way, when I find out that Pashy's not at all perfect, I can feel more confident about myself. Maybe she's not good at something that I **am good** at!

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"Oh yeah," I smiled and leaned back on the couch. "this is perfect!"

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>AN: Okay. Longer than the prologue, but not as juicy as Chapter 2 is gonna be! Just you wait. But first, plz review! Thanks you guys for the support last time and take care!*

Muah! **â™¥**

Crystalgurl101

3. Girls' Night Out

A/N: Hey ya'll. This is yours truly, back with the latest chapter to "Shadow," starring Miss Penelope, Miss Pashmina and Sir Cappy. I'm not gonna put in any review replies cause they were all kinda

similar. They pretty much went like this:**

_What's Pashy's weakness? _

_It couldn't get any more exciting than THIS! _

_UPDATE! _

**All I can say is, HA! Hahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha! HA! If you thought THAT was the best I've got, then GOD you're wrong! I can't wait to show ya'll what I've got in store for you THIS time!
**

Think you can handle it?

BTW, I am SOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSOSO sorry for taking forever to update. I've been so busy drowning in school and home duties, that I couldn't find the time to work on my stories.

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><p>Previously, on "Shadow"**

Then, it hit me.

If I'm hanging out with Pashmina more and more often than I usually am, then not only am I gonna feel more mature and grown-up, I might actually LEARN some things about her that I haven't bothered to find out--including things she isn't good at!

_**This is genius!** I thought to myself. **That way, when I find out that Pashy's not at all perfect, I can feel more confident about myself. Maybe she's not good at something that I AM good at!**

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_ "Oh yeah," I smiled and leaned back on the couch. "THIS is perfect!"_

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>Chapter 2: Girls' Night Out...

"Hey girls!" I squealed as I opened the door to Crystal Donaldson's silver sports convertible. "HI PASHMINA!" I was greeted by three screaming voices. Belonging to Bijou, Pepper and Sandy. Smiling brightly, I slid in the back of the car with Bijou and Pepper. Sandy was enjoying her turn in the front passenger seat.

"Hey Pashmina! How's life? It's been so long!" Crystal looked at me through her rearview mirror. She started to carefully drive out of the curb after I shut the door. See, Crystal's kinda filthy rich so when she (finally!)got her license a few weeks ago, she got a car as a Congrats gift from "Daddy" as she calls him. And I gotta admit, we were all kind of excited...oh heck. WE WENT CRAZY!

"Crystal, the last time I saw you was at school--four hours ago!" I

giggled. "I know! I was just teasing." she smiled. I laughed again and then, my attention went to Sandy. "I see our little Italian master is enjoying her turn up front!" I taunted.

Sandy turned to me, pouting dramatically. "Watch it Pash! I worked hard to get up here!" she whined. "Yeah! If studyin' the domesticated animals in Italian while watchin' Missy Elliot gettin' Punk'D counts as 'workin' hard,' then I am **so **with ya' girl!" Pepper cooed sarcastically. Everybody laughed out loud.

"Hey!" Sandy glared, but ended up laughing instead. "So, where are we off to?" I finally found the opportunity to ask after our little giggle fit. "Isabelle's. Sandy's choice." Crystal answered as she stopped at a red light. Isabelle's was one of the most popular hang-outs for the high school. It was **the **number one pizza/ice cream parlor in town.

After a few minutes of chatting about random things, like from Isabelle's extra large cheese and hot fudge sundae double special to our teachers' chicken-scratch handwriting(don't ask **how **we got there!), I decided to ask the one question I was dying to ask ever since me and Penelope's conversation a few minutes ago.

"Hey girls?" Everyone turned their heads to face me--except Crystal, who was still driving. "I was thinking maybe if we could take Penelope out with us tomorrow night." I confessed. "Penelope?" Bijou and Pepper squealed happily. My friends were totally fond of my little sister. "I thought you said she was too young to go out with us!" Sandy cocked her head.

"Yeah. When she was **seven!** But c'mon! She's thirteen years old now! I think it's about time she knew what we like to do as wild sixteen year olds!" I taunted sarcastically. "She has a point. We should **totally **take her out on a girls' night out tomorrow!" Crystal agreed after a little laugh.

"Oui! Penelope eez not going to be zhat cute little girl we've known for so long in a few years." Bijou piped up excitedly. "Yeah! We can go shopping and buy smoothies and watch cute guys and talk and giggle about everything!" Sandy sang.

"Cool! So it's settled. It's off to the mall tomorrow night." I declared with a pump of my fist. "Wow! You look and sound just like 'Amtaro, Pashmina!" Bijou pointed out loudly. I blushed as they all started to laugh amusingly.

â™¥ The next day... â™¥

"Oh man! I can't wait for Penny to get here!" I muttered to myself excitedly as I entered the lunchroom. I was usually kinda scared when I came in here, but today, I wasn't worried about the "food" the school had in store for us.

I sat down in our usual seat by the window. It was raining long and hard today, so the window(from outside)was soaking wet. I made sure I saved Penelope a seat, but then again, I didn't need to. Everyone knew me and Penelope were best friends anyways. But still, I was too excited for Penelope to find out that **I** had--

"Boo!"

I jumped and snapped my head to the side to see a familiar pair of rosy pink eyes. "Oh! Pen! Hey!" I smiled happily as Penny lifted her chin off of my shoulder. "Hey Caps! Did I scare ya' again?" she teased. "No. Sorry!" I chuckled and pointed out at the seat next to me.

"Awww!" Penelope picked up the folded piece of paper on it. "'Reserved For Miss Penelope Mafura!' That is so sweet!" she cooed, dramatically placing placing a hand on her heart. I looked down, adjusting my green baseball cap. "Yeah. Just sit down before people start to stare!" I said almost sheepishly.

Penelope giggled as she placed the card on the table and sat down in it's place. "So, whatcha so excited about?" she asked me after a few minutes of eating. "Huh?" I cocked my head. "You looked really excited when I came in. What was that about?" she clarified for me.

"Oh yeah! I was meaning to tell you **all **day! You'll **never **guess what I scored us tickets to!" I immedietaly felt myself get excited all over again. "What? You **know **I hate secrets!" Penelope seemed curious. I took in a deep breath--and prepared for a loud girly outburst. "You and me...are gonna watch...tonight...the one...and only...SCARY MOVIE FOUR!"

Penelope squealed ecstatically and hugged me until I almost lost oxygen. So now, my lungs **and **my ears hurted at the moment. "OH MY GOD! Cappy. I can't believe you got us tickets! I could kiss you right now!" she squeezed me some more. "Could you let me go instead?" I wheezed out, feeling myself get light-headed and losing my eyesight.

"Heke? OH MY GOD! I'm so sorry, Caps!" Penelope blushed and released me. I gulped in a deep breath of air and began gasping loudly. I coughed, grabbed onto my neck and landed on my knees dramatically. "OH MY GOD!** AIR! **SWEET, SWEET AIR!" I cried up at the heavens--or the ceiling.

"CAPPY!" Penelope scolded, giggling slightly. "I could've sworn it was you who said people are gonna STARE if I do SOMETHING EMBARASSING!" I smiled and stood up. But when I sat back in my seat and looked at Penny, I saw something that scared me.

Her face was suddenly paling. Her eyes lost that cute little happy twinkle. In it's place was a miserable darkness that shadowed over the pink pigment of her eyes. She was definetaly not smiling anymore. She was biting her lower lip nervously and staring at the floor. Just then, I got a sickly feeling that something had gone horribly, horribly wrong!

"Penny? Wh-W-What's...wrong?" I couldn't control the stuttering from my voice from the uneasy tension burning between us. Uh-oh! What if Penelope had changed her mind about seeing "Scary Movie 4?" No, that couldn't be it! Ever since the boys let us see the first three movies a while ago behind Pashmina's back, she had been **dying** to see the fourth one! So what was wrong with her?

Right now though, Penelope wasn't saying anything. Her face and hands were turning a very pale white, but her cheeks were flaming red(that

was hard seeing from her long hair falling over her face). Just looking at her sucked out my gut to talk. But I found it again and decided to speak now, before I lost my nerve again.

"Penny? Could you **please **tell me what's wrong?" I asked gently and placed a palm over her white hand. I could've sworn I felt a surge of electricity wash over us at the touch, but I focused instead on her. Penelope flinched hesitantly. I knew she wanted to talk, but couldn't find any words to say. "Do you...**want **to go see Scary Movie 4?"

"More than anything in the world..." she finally spilled out. But when she left the words hanging, I knew right away, there was a "but" coming up. There always was. "But...?" I gulped, mentally telling myself to prepare for a big blowout. "But...I-I can't go." Tears welled up in Penelope's eyes. She shut them to avoid crying in front of me.

"**WHAT!**" What happened? Are you grounded? Babysitting? **Who died?**" For some reason, that last question made her laugh a little. But she shook her head. "Nobody." Penelope looked up, her eyes full of pure misery. I wish I could just wipe that sadness away to see that little shine again.

"So, why can't you go?" I wondered. When Penelope threatened to stare at her lap, I touched her hand. I felt the spark again, but ignored it once more. "It's okay, Penny. You can tell me." _Despite the fact that I felt like I had been punched in the stomach._

"Well...Pashmina kind of invited me to go out with her and the girls. Tonight." she explained.

"Really?" my eyes widened. That kind of surprised me. I was expecting some other excuse. "Yeah. I'm sorry. I swear I really wanted to go to the movies with you! Maybe I should cancel..." The tears came back as Penelope reached for her cellphone.

"WHOA! Hold on there, Mafura!" I snatched the phone from her. Penny looked up at me with a shocked "Hey!" look on her face. "Pen, I'm not trying to **get **you to cancel. Look, Pashmina offered you something big. This is obviously important. So go for it!"

"What! You **want **me to go?" she raised an eyebrow. "I want you to go and have a good time!" I replied. "After all, haven't you wanted a girls' night out before?" I smirked playfully. She laughed and calmed down a bit. "I guess. But it doesn't seem right. Are you sure I should go?" Penelope still seemed skeptical.

"Positive! Besides, we can watch that movie any time, right? I'll just return the tickets this afternoon. It's no big deal. Go!" I assured her. "Really?" Penelope perked up hopefully. "Sure!" I smiled. Penelope smiled back and hugged me gratefully. "Thank you so much for understanding Cappy! You're the bestest friend in the whoooooooole world! I dunno who could **ever** replace you!" she said.

I blushed and felt my insides tingle when I felt her skin against my shirt. My heart pounded faster than ever as I found myself hugging her back. "No probs, Penny. But we might wanna stop hugging!" Then I

leaned in closer to her ear. "People might stare!" I hissed. "CAPPY!" Penelope laughed and punched me playfully.

Penelope had to go to the library to study with a friend of her's, so she left lunch early that day. "Thanks again Cappy. I ****swear****, we'll watch Scary Movie 4 tomorrow night or on Sunday. Then I can tell you everything that happens tonight!" she squealed. "Go! You're late!" I waved her off teasingly. She giggled, waved and rushed out the door.

When she finally left, I sighed loudly and bonked my forehead against the cold, glass window. I stared out at the blank grayness and watched the raindrops slide slowly down the window. And just like the rain, I felt the exact same way.

Crappy.

And God. It ****sucked!****

That night...

 $\hat{a}^{\text{TM}} \mathbb{Y}$ [illegible]

****That**** was the first thing I heard the millisecond I stepped out of the door. I slightly flinched and blushed a light pink as I heard the excited squeals.

***PENNY!** OMG, long time, no see!" Sandy screamed. "Ohhh, you look so cute in zhat gorgeous little outfit!" Bijou gushed over my clothes. I was wearing a bright yellow sleeveless top with small crystal rhimestones lining the soft V-shaped collar, a blue denim jacket with yellow stitchings, matching mini pleated skirt, a yellow belt and white sneakers. My blondish hair, usually silky-straight, was softly curled at the bottom with a barrette holding it back(Pashmina did it for me).

"Hi Pashmina. Hey Penelope!" Crystal removed the sunglasses from her aqua-green eyes and winked at me. "Crystaaaaaal!" I cried. Then I looked at the back of the convertible. "Sandyyyyy! Bijooouuu! Pepperrrrrr!"

I could see a couple of things had changed since the last time I had seen the girls. For one, Bijou's pigtails had passed her neck and were now brushing against her shoulders. Another was Sandy was now alot girlier than last year. Also, I think Pepper's gotten bigger. From her chest area.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Hop aboard, silly! Cause we're about to tear up these streets!" Crystal patted the passenger seat next to her driver's seat and put on her sunglasses.

"Oh God, Crys. No!" Sandy shook her head. "Remember zee last time you went wild on the wheel? On **purpose?**" Bijou added. "Relaaaax! I ain't gonna attract news reporters this time!" Crystal scoffed. I laughed, reminding myself to get details on that story later tonight.

To break the ice, the girls started asking me questions about how their old middle school was doing and if anything had changed since their graduation. Knowing they weren't trying to be nosy little ah-dults, I gave all the info they needed. I gave them my schedule, my classmates and my teachers' names.

Before I knew it, I was talking, chatting and giggling with them, like I was with girls my own age. See, that's what I liked so much about them. Instead of being just my sister's best friends, they were like my best friends/guardians. I never felt inferior or younger than they were despite our age difference. The girls treated me like a teenager. Not like a kid. I always felt totally comfortable around them--unless they were in some kind of heated war with one another for some wacked-out teenage reason.

When we arrived to the mall, the first thing we did--**GO SHOPPING!** I got myself a dee-lish yellow dress with spaghetti straps that reached a few inches above my knees. It had a beautiful matching rose with silver glitter sprinkled all over the dress. I also bought some new lip gloss, a new cellphone carrying case, a cute skirt, black ballet slippers with embroidered pearls and jewels and white fuzzy bunny slippers.

As me and the girls walked around our ninth store(?), an hour later, I realized that the last time I had felt like a real girl, was well...**never!** A feeling of pure happiness washed over me like a waterfall. I could feel my heart feel almost complete. Just **almost**. So, what was I missing? More lip gloss? Another cellphone case? Another caramel sundae? More money?

"Are you **sure** I can go along with the other girls?" some random girl turned to a guy behind her. "Sure! After all, they obviously have something 'girlish' to show you! Go ahead!" the boy waved her off playfully with a smile. The girl flashed a smile and happily kissed the boy's cheek. Thanks Jason. You're the best!"

Before I knew it, I felt hot tears prickling the back of my eyes. Quickly, I blinked and squeezed my eyes hard to keep them from spilling over my cheeks. However, no matter how much I tried, the guilty lump that grew inside my throat wouldn't leave me alone.

I just couldn't understand why I felt so damned guilty everytime I thought about Cappy. He said it was cool for me to come to the mall. He practically **encouraged** me to drop our little movie night! So...why was I feeling so low-down crappy? Why was something gnawing at me like a frickin' mosquito? Was...was this wrong? Did I **belong** here with my sister? Or at the movies with my best friend?

"Penelope? Pennyyyyyyyyyy? Penelope Alyson! EARTH TO PEN-PEN!"

That last sentence immediatly grabbed my attention. "Hey!" I turned and glared coldly at Sandy. The redhead giggled. "I thought I told you **never** to call me that!" I hissed so people wouldn't hear us. "Hey, I needed **something** to grab your attention. I was calling you like, ages ago!" Sandy shrugged innocently.

"Oh." It dawned on me that thinking about Cappy had had me drifting off and staring out into space. Sandy didn't seem to notice anything when she picked up two T-shirts. One was red. The other green. They

both had the words "I'm Watchin' U!" in green, glittered camouflaged letters.

"Okay. Should I get the red one? Or the green one? Cause the green one would like, match my eyes. But the red one brings out the intensity of my hair. And not to mention it's my favorite color. But then again, I look totally awesome in green and I look best in it. What do think would work for me?" Sandy finally finished her speech and took in a deep breath.

"Uhhh..." was all I could say. How could I help Sandy choose her newest top when I had Cappy flashing on and off in my brain like a lightbulb? But I shook him off for enough time to peer from top to top. Which one would look best for Sandy? _Focus, Penny. Focus!_ I told myself. But the more I tried, the harder it became.

Just then, I saw a white top with the identical words right behind Sandy. "Hey!" I walked over and snatched it out of the rack for her to see. "What about this one? After all, white goes with everything, right?" I chirped happily. Sandy sighed and placed the two shirts on another rack.

"I leave the shirt out in the open for you on purpose **just** so you can find it and offer to me and it took you** thirty two **seconds to figure that out! Bravo!" she mimicked my peppiness sarcastically. I blushed. She was right. An obvious answer like that should've come out of my mouth thirty **one **seconds ago! "Right..." I nodded sheepishly.

Sandy immedietaly grabbed my hand and led me out of the store. "Alright, Mafura Jr. Spill!" she sat me down on a bench nearby and placed her hands on her hips. I was forced to bit my tongue to avoid violently lashing out at her for calling me "Mafura Jr." After all, I had a serious profanity problem.

I sighed instead. "Nothing's wrong, Sandy." I lied and stood up, hoping she'd leave me alone. Right now, I did **not **wanna talk. But she wouldn't let me get away so easy. She grabbed me by the shoulder and forced me back on my butt. "Oh no, you don't! I caught you redhanded!" she declared.

"With **what! **Drugs?" I asked, obviously getting annoyed. "No. **You're** not focusing on shopping. Which can mean only one thing: You're being bugged by something! Now what is it?" Sandy told me.

God. Why did she have to be so freaking smart! I mean, the girl can sense anxiety from a mile away. I think it's in her family's blood. On account Crystal's always complaining how she can't keep anything hidden from Stan.

"I-I don't really feel like I should tell you!" I blurted out. I silently prayed she wouldn't take it offensively. "Why? You can't trust us?" Sandy stared me down. I looked at the floor, the heat on my face almost unbearable. When I glanced up, tears threatened to fall from my eyes. Sandy's face softened the second she saw me. "Penny...?"

"I-I...I dunno Sandy!" Standing up, I stormed off to a water fountain right behind us. I couldn't stand being in the limelight anymore.

"Penny!" Sandy, slightly alarmed, followed me. When she caught up to me, I was too busy flicking at the water to even sense her presence.

"Penny. If I just did something to embarrass you, then I'm so sorry!" she began. "No! No, it wasn't that." I shook my head. I didn't want Sandy to feel guilty as well. "Well, either way, know this." Sandy placed a hand on my shoulder. "You can tell me and the others anything. Whatever it is, just let us know. We won't make you feel stupid or whatever. You gotta learn that, 'kay?"

She squeezed my shoulder reassuringly, which made me look up at her. I saw trust in her green eyes. Maybe she's right. I thought. After all, Sandy was a girl just like me. Obviously, she had been through things just like me back in seventh grade. And she was only three years my senior. She'd understand. Something urged me to tell her. It was trust. So I did.

"Sandy I need advice." I confessed. Already, I was feeling better. "Outfits? Make-up? Hair care? Or diet?" Sandy asked. "Neither." I replied. Suddenly, Sandy got all mischeivious. "Ohhhhh! So is it about a ****booooy?****" she cooed. "Yeah. Cappy to be exact." I nodded.

Sandy's coyness immedietaly went away. Her eyes widened in shock. ****Cappy!** ****her mouth hung open.** "Uhhh, yeah?" I was pretty confused on why Sandy was so surprised. I guess because Cappy's the one with all of my answers and not the one who causes the problems.

"Well, what did he do to you?" Sandy wanted the scoop. I could tell. "Nothing. I did something to ****him.****" I said. Sandy's eyes grew rounder. "What?" the redhead leaned over, fascinated.

"See, last night. Pashmina invited me over to the mall, which I obviously said yes to. But then, this morning at school, Cappy told me he had tickets to Scary 4 for tonight! I really wanted to go, but I was forced to say no because I was already coming with you guys. And now, I feel guilty as hell because me and Cappy were looking forward to this movie all month and I had to ditch the last freaking minute!" I stopped for a breather.

Sandy continued to stare. "Sandy...have you ever gotten caught in the middle of your best friends and your teenage priorities?" I finally asked her.

Sandy laughed. and shook her head. "Penny, no one told you hanging with us was like, a priority!" she giggled once more. "Sure. Tell that to the kids in my school, why dontcha'?" I pouted dramtically and folded my arms across my chest. Sandy smiled. "Well, to be honest, I've been caught between the girls and Maxwell. Does that count?" Sandy asked.

I smiled. "Sure. Close enough!" I answered. After a few seconds of silence, Sandy looked at me curiously. "Pen, does being here feel right?" she told me. "... I was silent as I looked up. "I'm not sure to be honest." I shrugged blankly. "Well, that's something ****you should figure out.**" Sandy patted my head and left me alone to think.

â™¥ _Two hours later... _â™¥

"Crystal, remind us again ****why ****you dragged us out of the mall ****just ****to buy smoothies at the movies? They have a food court for a reason!" me, Pashmina and Bijou laughed at Penelope's complaint. She had a point, but then again, so did we. "I already told you, Penny. The smoothies at the movies are much better than the ones at the mall. You gotta follow your tastebud instincts!" Crystal told her.

Penelope shot me a private

"Is-this-what-you-guys-do-every-Friday-night-Pepper?" look. I giggled and responded with a "Hey! It's-what-we-teenagers-do!" shrug.

We were piling out of Crystal's pretty little car, heading for the movie theater up ahead. Sandy shut the door behind her and sighed. "Besides, we could use a good movie." she added to Crystal's explanation. "Uh-oh." was all I could say to myself.

â™¥ _After ordering their smoothies a couple of minutes later...
_â™¥

"Will ya'll just ****HURRY UP!****" I whined for the fourth time. This was exactly what happened everytime we went to the movies. Bijou, Pashmina, Sandy and Crystal would ALWAYS fight over which movie they should watch. And I was the one who didn't bother get in the battlefield. I was from the country, not the friggin' army.

"See, ****this ****is what happens everytime we come here!" I told Penelope as Sandy voted for "Stick It," Bijou insisted on watching "Take The Lead," Pashmina fought for "RV," and Crystal complained on seeing "The Wild" instead.

Laughing, Penelope stood up. "I have to go the bathroom. You coming Pepper?" she asked. THANK THE LORD, THE GIRL HAD SAID THE MAGIC WORDS! "Sure! I'm getting tired of watching 'Battleship' in 'Girl's Gone Ugly' version anyways!" I shrugged. She giggled.

"And when ****I**** get back," I turned towards the others. "I wanna see ya'll agreeing on something--OR I'M TAKING YOU TO WATCH SILENT HILL!" I threatened. "Ooooh!" Penelope cooed eagerly. ****NOOOOOOO!**** WE'LL AGREE ON SOMETHING! WE SWEAR!" Sandy, Pashmina and Bijou shook their heads furiously. They ****hated ****horror films.

"Actually...that doesn't sound half bad! The boys said the movie kicked a--" Crystal stopped when the other three dared her to make another peep with their eyes. Penelope and I laughed out loud. "Get compromising!" I said as I turned on my heel and walked off.

We had our little personal "Stall Time," as I call it, washed and sanitized our hands. Despite the neatness of the bathrooms. After all, and I quote, "You can never be too careful." Unquote.

We decided to stare at ourselves in the mirrors to give the girls a little more time.

"You think they decided what to watch by now?" Penny wondered as she applied more Sweet Peach lip gloss. "Pretty much. ****UGH!****" I sighed as I stared at the hideous planet on my face. "What is it?" Penelope looked at me. ****Look**** at this zit. It's enormous!" I whined.

Penelope cocked an eyebrow. "Uhhh...what zit? You can barely see it!" she told me, squinting dramatically. "Hel-****looo!**** It's right there! You can ****totally**** see it!" I pointed, being careful not to touch it. It was gross enough! "Riiight!" the preteen rolled her eyes and walked out the door.

Just then, a pair of double doors to one of the many screening rooms swung open and a huge group of people walked out, chatting and laughing hysterically. "What movie did ****they**** come from?" Penelope cocked her head. I looked up the glowing sign above the doors. "Oh. That new movie, Scary Movie 4." I answered casually. I could've sworn just then I saw Penny fidget.

Bzzzzzt. Bzzzzzt. Bzzzzzt. Bzzzzzt.

****Oh!**** Shoot!" Shocked, Penelope quickly reached into her pocket and pulled out her vibrating cellphone. "What is it?" I snuck a peek at the screen. "Oh. Just a text message from a friend of mine, Becky." Penny silently read the message, something about math this morning, and began replying by punching in numbers on the keypad.

"Bonjour!" Bijou, followed by the other four, walked up from behind us. They looked at Penelope and then at me. "Text message." I answered.

"Sorry 'bout the minor setback, but we ****need ****a movie!" Sandy complained. "Do you have any recommendations--****ozzer ****zhan insane horror films?" Bijou frowned at the last part. "Ugh. Honestly, don't ya'll agree on anythang anymore?" I rolled my eyes.

****SWISH!****

Just then, the doors to Scary Movie 4 reopened. We turned around, confused. _Didn't everyone already leave that room? _I asked myself.

Suddenly, Bijou's emerald eyes widened. I blinked. _What the--! _was all I could say to myself. Crystal and Pashmina gasped lightly. Sandy went pale, looking as if she was praying that she was seeing a hallucination. Unfortunetaly, the "hallucination" was living and breathing.

"Okay, I sent the reply message back to Be..." And it was in ****BIG**** trouble too! "...cky." When Penelope looked up again, all time froze.

I didn't blame her for suddenly dropping the phone onto the thick blue carpeted floor.

I couldn't blame her when her jaw dropped open and allowed her mouth to hang by a thread.

And I certainly ****shouldn't**** blame her for when her eye began to twitch terribly.

For standing right in front of us...

...eye-to-eye with Penny...

...was Cappy and another girl.

* * *

>â™¥ <p>AN: Ahhhhhh! Didn't see that coming didja'?
Once again, I apologize for taking SO damn long to update
this.**

**The next chapter is called "...Gone BAD!" The title is like the
continuation of the title of chapter 2. So it should be "Girls' Night
Out...Gone BAD!" when put together.**

**PLZ be patient for "Hamtaro: Spring Break-Up" peoples, cause it'll
be coming around the mountain ASAP.**

Crystalgurl101

**PS: Guess when my birthday's gonna be? NEXT WEEK ON MAY 12TH!
**

**WOO-HOO!
**

**That's right! I'll officially be fifteen in seven days. **

**YAY MEE! **

So B-Day shout-outs WILL be accepted next Friday.

**Okay, that's it for now. Love you all. **

R&R PLZ!

4. Gone Bad!

**A/N: I am the slowest updater in the universe.
**

Enjoy!

Â§

**

* * *

>

Previously on "Shadow"...
>

**SWISH!**

**

—
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—

Â§

* * *

>Chapter 3: ...GONE BAD!

"Hey Penny! Isn't that Cappy over there?"

The millisecond I heard Pepper's familiar voice, my heart jumped
against my chest. Hard. I looked towards the the trace of the voice
and I immedietaly broke out into a cold sweat when I met eyes with
Penelope. But she wasn't alone. Crystal, Sandy, Bijou, Pepper and
Pashmina were all gaping at me with round mouths and looks of total
shock. Penelope, however, wasn't even breathing.

Her look of surprise had eventually simmered into a stare of pure
hatred. Her pink eyes had slowly darkened into a faded rose and I
could see a spark of anger flashing in them. Actually, to be honest,
it looked more like a craving to kill me with her bare hands.

Her glossed lips were pressed together in a tight line as she bit on
her bottom lip. Her hair was hanging over her shoulders and like her
body, it wouldn't move. Her hands were a sickly white while her face
was already boiling into a furious red. I saw her cellphone lying by
her feet. She must've dropped it.

This girl was fuming.

I saw Pepper lean over and whisper in her ear. She slowly nodded,

refusing to take her eyes off of me. Probably because she knew I'd run and hide if she were to dare glance away for a millisecond. I wasn't sure what Pepper said, but I ****knew ****that it involved me! Then, Pashmina whispered something else, touching her shoulder. She shook her head.

I gulped. I was dead.

Â§ _Penelope... _Â§

"Psst! In case ya' didn't hear me, Pen, I asked if that was Cappy over there." Pepper whispered in my ear cautiously. All I could do was nod, seeing as which I couldn't find my voice yet. "Penny. Are you alright?" Pashmina asked me quietly, feeling my shoulder.

__**NO!**_ Because my best friend is standing there with some chick,
and I dunno why!_ I shook my head to a "no." Cause I wasn't afraid to
be honest.

Finally, I found the strength to walk towards Cappy. He looked more scared than ever. _Say your prayers Cappy, cause I'm coming over!_ My pace was nice and easy. Well at least, I tried to keep it that way. I tried not to make note of the girl standing beside Cappy eyeing me. He had her stand behind him instead as I approached them both.

He laughed nervously. "H-H-Hi-H-Hiiiiiii Pennyyyyyyy!" he waved weakly. I forced a smile myself. "Hey Cappy!" I squealed in the fakest sweet-voice. Cappy flinched at my tone, sensing my anger. He lowered his voice to a whisper. "Look, before you say anything, I--"

"HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEYYYYYYYYYYY CAPPYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY!" Sandy suddenly ran right in between us and patted Cappy on the back. The other girls quickly followed her. "Bonjour Cappy!" Bijou smiled nervously, obviously trying to stall time so I could kill Cappy in a more...appropriate scenario.

After everybody said their joyful hello's, Bijou finally turned her attention to the girl who was with Cappy(then again, ****somebody ****had to!). "Oh! Cappy, who eez your pretty friend, and why haven't we met her yet?" Bijou cooed. I glanced at her and I had(coughhatedcough)to admit, she ****was ****kinda pretty.

The girl was no older than me and Cappy and was about my height. She had a pile of sexy, wavy light-brown hair with bold pink highlights to match. She was very slim(although she seemed to have a slightly bigger than mine)and nice tanned skin. She had honey-brown colored eyes. She was wearing a white tee with ruffled sleeves and a pink flower stitching embroidered across one side of the shirt. She had on a pink miniskirt(that perfectly matched her highlights)with three layers of ruffles hanging at the bottom. Her pink Puma sneakers completed the look. After a secret bite of my lip, I made it clear to myself that this new girl was definetaly A-list material.

"Ahem." Cappy cleared his throat and allowed this "new girl" to step forward. "Girls, this is Alana. She just transferred from New Mexico." Alana smiled shyly as Bijou introduced herself to her.

_0.0 She doesn't even LIVE here! Then why the hell did Cappy watch

the movie with ****her?**** _

As the girls introduced themselves to Alana, I angrily glared at Cappy with a "So-your-girlfriend-doesn't-even-****live****-here-huh?" frown. He caught me and gulped. "Umm..." I heard someone say. I turned around and saw Alana right in front of me. "...aaaannnd you aaarrreeee...?" she urged sweetly.

"Right, silly me. I'm Penelope." I faked a smile as I uncrossed my arms and shook her hand. "So, I hear you're Cappy's best friend!" Alana flashed a smile. _What ****else ****did he tell you? That I used to suck my thumb as a toddler?_ "Yup! And yooouuuu'rrrrre...his cousin?" I nodded. _Pfft! Cappy wishes you were right now!_

"Actually, no. I'm his friend!" Alana corrected. "Family friend?" I cocked my head. "No. We just met. He's ****such ****a nice guy!" Alana smiled at Cappy, making him stare at his shoes as the girls eyed him. _I ****bet ****he is..._

"Yeah. That's why we're friends!" I said, looking over at Cappy. He gave me a pleading "Please-don't-give-me-that-look!" bite of the lip. I ignored him.

As the girls started mingling with Alana, I lightly kicked Pashmina. "Pash. I want a minute alone with my best friend." I growled so nobody would hear us. "U-Uhhh...I-I dunno. Are you sure you won't try to hang him on the Exit sign with a pinata string like you attempted to do last time?" Pashmina asked. "It was pre-K, and he stole my 64 pack crayons! What was I ****supposed ****to do?" I countered.

"Tell on him." Pashmina smirked before turning to the girls. She nodded at me and Cappy, letting them know I wanted to be alone. They cautiously pointed up at the Exit sign. _****WHAT! ****It was Pre-K for God's sake!_ I silently whined. Pashmina shook her head. Eventually, they agreed to leave. But they had to take Alana with them...

"Heeeeeeeey Alana! Girl, how would you like to know something like, totally super-private about this movie theater?" Sandy patted Alana's shoulder. "Like what? Is it about the price? The bathrooms? The employees lounge?" Alana asked. "Nope! Even better!" Crystal leaned over and hissed in her ear. "C'mon! We'll tell you somewhere else!" Bijou started to lead her away.

"You go ahead! I think I forgot my wallet in the theater!" Cappy lied. "I'll stay with him to make sure!" I went along with it. The girls took Alana and led her away to the other side of the theater. _Good. Then, she won't hear me scream even ****if**** I'm in the movie room!_

The second they headed a corner, I dropped the sweet-hospitalityness, grabbed Cappy by the collar and dragged him to an empty hallway. I slammed him against the wall, and just like that, we were nose-to-nose.

****DING DING DING!**** It was on.

"What the hell are you doing here with ****them!****" Cappy was the first to speak. "Well, what the hell are you doing here with ****her!****" I

mimicked. "I asked you** first!**" Cappy shot back. "Ugh. Well for your information, it was **their **idea to go watch a movie for our Girls' Night-Out--in case you forgot--and thought 'Oh well, it's not like Cappy'll be here anyways!' But wait. You **were **here...WITH A **STRANGER!**" I hissed.

"First of all! Number one: I came here **originally** to return the tickets. Number two: I wasn't planning on staying either! And number three: Alana is not a stranger!" Cappy held out three fingers. "Number one: Originally, huh? Number two: What made you change your mind? And number three: So, you've **been **knowing this girl, huh?" I held out three fingers of my own.

"Well, of course not! She just moved here from New Mexico!" Cappy shouted. I tapped my chin sarcastically. "Hmm...sounds pretty stranger-like to me!" I shrugged. _This dude is crazy!_ "ACK! Yes, she may sound like a stranger, but it's not what you think, Penelope!" Cappy sighed. "Yeah, keep talking!" I demanded.

"Ugh!" Cappy groaned. "Please, lemme explain Penny!" he begged. "Am I cutting in?" I folded my arms across my chest and leaned against the wall next to him. Cappy sighed again and looked at me, but I refused to turn his way. "Sit down." he told me. I obeyed, and closed my eyes. He did the same. "Well?" I frowned. "Okay. It started like this..."

Â§ _Flashback to three hours ago..._ Â§

"Thank you sir and enjoy the show. NEXT!" the cashier--or cashierette as Penny and I like to call the female cash register employees--called. I looked up from the Scary Movie 4 tickets and took a step forward. _Penny._ Speaking of her, I remembered why I was here in the first place. To return the tickets of the movie we had wanted to see for months.

"Yes, how many children?" the cashierette asked the young man before me. I was up next, so I didn't have to wait long. I sighed as I stared down once more at the two white tickets in my hand. I had **never **had to return movie tickets before. Penny and I would watch every show! But there was a first time for everything.

When Penelope had told me all about her plans for a girls' night-out, I was pretty disappointed at first. But then I decided to try and be happy for her. This really meant alot to her to feel older for once. Besides, this meant I had time for myself. Hmm...maybe I should watch a guy flick. Penelope hates those! Or I could go home and surf the Web 'til 5 am! I haven't done that since September...

Suddenly, something hit me in my lower tummy. And it was coming down hard. _I'm thinking it was the four glasses of iced tea I had today..._ I started squirming, knowing what iced tea did to me. But the more I tried to shake the feeling off, the stronger it got. _Oh God! Just hang on for like, two milliseconds! I'm almost up!_ But my guts told me they wouldn't hang on for that long.

Finally, I decided to just leave the damn line. Besides, it wasn't long and I'd be back in like, what? Thirty seconds? _Fine. You win._ Without thinking twice, I turned around, told the lady behind me she could go ahead of me, and ran for the mens' room like a maniac.

When I came out a minute (and twenty-eight seconds to be exact) later, I turned my attention back to the line. HA! It hadn't changed a bit! "Sweet! I am so smart! And now to return those damn movie tickets..." But when I reached into my sweater where I remembered putting them, they weren't there! "...aaaannnddd there's no tickets here?" I checked them again. Nothing.

"WHAT THE--!" I squeaked and checked my other pocket. Nada. I rummaged through my jean pockets. Zip. I took off my hat and shook it. Zero. "***Bullcrap!**" I lost them! Well, there's nineteen dollars worth of trees I'll never get back." I sighed as I plopped the cap back on my head.

"Um...excuse me?"

"ACK!" I jumped at the tap I felt on my shoulder. I whirled around and literally froze when I locked my brown eyes with someone's honey colored ones. They belonged to a girl. She was a few inches--probably two or three--shorter than me and had wavy light-brown hair, pink highlights, and timid little look on her face.

She cleared her throat quietly and stared at the floor. "U-Uh, sorry for scaring you, b-but I-I think you dropped these." she whispered as she pulled something out from behind her. It was the two tickets!

"The tickets!" I gasped. The girl placed them in my palm. "Holy crap, I thought I lost these! Where'd you find 'em?" I asked frantically. The girl smiled warmly. "I was walking in and saw them fall out of your pocket just in time. I could see you were in a bit of a rush." she said, pointing behind me at the bathroom. I blushed. "Sorry."

The girl giggled, revealing a pair of perfect snow-white teeth that seemed to glow against her sun-kissed skin. "Yeah well...enjoy the show. See ya' around." she said. Quickly, she brushed past me, ready to leave. "Wait!" All of a sudden, I whipped around and grabbed her arm. It felt soft on my fingertips. The girl turned to look at me.

I wasn't **exactly **sure why I had stopped her in the first place. To be honest, I had no clue why! "See...I-I was supposed to watch it w-with...with a friend. But, sh..m-my friend couldn't make it." Whoa! Rewind, and freeze! Did I just exclude the "she" part? "S-Sooo...do you wanna watch it with me instead? You know! Since we just met and such."

Now rewind, freeze and ZOOM IN on that! Did I just **invite **her to watch the movie with me? Like, as in on a date or something? _But you don't **know **her!_ my conscience wailed. _Besides, what would Penelope think if she found out?_ I had a point. I was supposed to return these. Not give 'em away for free.

But the question was **why **I had done it. I looked at her timidly. She looked a bit surprised. All we could do was stand there, my hand on her arm, staring at each other silently, wondering why I had asked such a question.

Finally, her glance shifted down to her Puma sneakers. Her rosy cheeks grew slightly rosier. "W-We-W-Welll..." she managed to choke out. "...i-i-it-i-it's just th-t-that I-I don't really know my way

around here y-yet and--"

"Hang on, hang on! Hold it!" I stopped her, making a time-out sign with my hands. "You mean...you don't even live here?" I asked her. Her cheeks went from dark pink to faded red. "U-Uh-U-Uhhh...not t'il now. I just came here from New Mexico a couple of days ago." she replied shyly. _Oh, look what you did, you evil Cappy!_ I scolded myself. _You invited a poor new girl to a movie mistaking her for a citizen!_

I smiled, deciding to make this a little more comfortable for her. "Well, why didn'tcha say so! I could've welcomed you properly a long time ago! My name's Cappy." the girl smiled back, relaxing. "Thank you. I'm Alana." she nodded in thanks. We shook hands. "Say, ahem, Alana?" Alana giggled. "How 'bout we watch the movie and you can tell me more about yourself. I'll even show you around town!"

Alana slowly nodded, her face glowing. "I'd like that...Cappy!" I laughed softly and offered her my arm. "Ya' hungry?" I said. Alana was hesitant, but when she looked at me, she smiled and linked arms with me and nodded. Smiling as well, I led her to the snacks counter. "So, what grade are you in, Alana..?"

Â§ _Flashback ends... _Â§

"...and when I came out, I just saw you!" Cappy took in a deep breath from the long speech. I nodded as if understanding. "Gosh, Cappy. You know what? I had **no **idea how serious this was." I said gently. "Serious? What's so serious?" Cappy squinted in confusion. "I had no idea how seriously **LACKING **YOU ARE IN BRAIN ACTIVITY!" I exploded out, tapping at my head mockingly.

"WHAT!" Cappy looked taken aback. "Cappy, you were supposed to return those damn tickets! Not auction 'em off to some girl! No matter **how **big her butt is!" I was fuming at how stupid Cappy could be. "PENNY!" Cappy sounded like my sister. "Hey! Don't blame **me **cause all guys are equal!" I scoffed and stood up. I was so outta here.

Instead, Cappy grabbed me by the arm and forced me to spin around. "Let go of me, you perv!" I demanded. "Listen Penelope. I already told you: we met, we said hi, I invited her over for a movie and we just chatted! Nothing else, I swear!" Cappy reassured me, standing up as he did.

"Oh really?" I cocked an eyebrow. "Yeah, really!" Cappy nodded. "Yeah? Then, why don't I believe you!" I spun on my heel. Cappy grabbed me and turned me around. "Okay, what is your deal?" he asked. "What's my deal? What's **MY** deal!" I shouted so loud, Cappy let go of my shoulders. "WHAT'S **YOUR **DEAL? YOU TOOK A STRANGER TO A MOVIE WITH **MY **TICKET! BEHIND **MY **BACK! ON **MY **NIGHT! SO THE QUESTION HERE IS, WHAT IS **YOUR **DEAL?"

"PENELOPE, WILL YOU GET A GRIP? CALM DOWN, PLEASE!" Cappy spoke just as loudly as I did, on account I was freaking out. "Penny, please! Just listen to me for like, three seconds!" he pleaded. "Too late! You already wasted four seconds of my life by just **saying **that line!" I shook my head. "Penny, I--"

"Look Cappy. I've had enough of this..." I interrupted, but Cappy cut

in right back. "Listen, Penny. I was trying to be friendly! What else could I have done?" A million evil little options ran through my mind. I decided to go with none of them. "You could've returned the tickets like you promised me you would before running off to the boys' room just to drop them and have **her **clean up after you!" I suggested sarcastically.

Cappy sighed as if trying to keep calm. "Penny, you know I couldn't have done that. Alana's new here! What if she were to get lost or something?" he told me. "**So?**" That's her parents' problem!" I shrugged carelessly. "Penelope, don't you **dare **bring up her parents like that!" Cappy warned. "What-EVER!" I rolled my eyes. "Penny, relax! It's no big deal!" Cappy tried to smile.

"Well, it's a pretty big deal for me! You **promised** we'd see that movie--together!" I whined. "I **know **I did! But what do you want from me? Seriously! I mean, me and Alana are just friends!" Cappy threw his hands up in the air. "That's not exactly the way **we **saw it..." I muttered to myself. But when I saw Cappy stare at me speechless, I realized he had heard me.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked quietly. I hung my head, hoping he wouldn't see me blush. "Penelope...is this about Alana?" Cappy added. "Cappy, what is wrong with you!" I immediately changed the subject, as my head shot upwards. "You said we'd see this together! Remember? We've been waiting for months for this movie--!"

"Penelope, **don't **change the subject! Now answer me! Is this about Alana?" Cappy stared straight into my eyes. But I broke the eye contact. "**NO!**" Okay? This is about you and me! Not Little Miss New-Girl!" I quickly answered. "Now answer **my **question Cappy. Why did you watch this with Alana when you knew damn well those seats were reserved for us!"

"Because, I...because...I-I..." Suddenly, Cappy was stuck. "I-It was cause..." For a few moments, I stood there waiting impatiently. That is, until he hit me. "You have nothing to say, do you?" I asked coldly. "No! No, it's not that! Really! It's just that I--"

"No. No." I shook my head. "It's okay." I frowned angrily at him. Then without another word, I shoved past him and stalked off. "Penelope!" Cappy called my name. But I refused to look back. I heard him running after me. This made me break out into a run as well. I went around the corner and slipped into the girls' bathroom right when his hand was inches from my shoulder.

"Penny, please!" Cappy begged from behind the door. But I refused to say anything. Finally I heard him sigh in defeat. I leaned against the door, my heart's endless thumping squeezing my chest. I bit my lip. I felt like sinking my teeth into my lip's flesh and tasting the blood so badly, just to make my anger vanish.

That jerk. That asshole. That son of a bitch. How could he be so stupid? **How!** I couldn't breathe, so I inhaled and exhaled gulps of air through my mouth. Those stinging tears you'd feel when you were completely pissed off started forming in the back of my eyes. I was so angry at him, I felt numb.

Eventually, I sunk down to the floor and pulled my knees to my chest.

Wrapping my arms around my legs, I buried my chin in the space between my knees. The tears burned my eyes, but they never slid down. I squeezed them shut to shake them off.

I just don't get it. We had an understanding! I **trusted **Cappy. I really did. And he totally understood me for the Girls' Night Out. He said he'd return those tickets. But he didn't. Did he feel bad for that girl? I mean, Cappy's that kind of guy! But still! If he was to watch a movie, why did it have to use **my **ticket to let **her **in! I dunno why, but that part just...blew my top! You know? It's like auctioning off my home to her! Damn! Cappy, why did you betray me? Why did you take advantage of my trust? Why did you lie to me? **Why?***

The entrance and exit doors could be seen from the bathroom's point of view, so I decided to take a peek outside to see if Cappy had left already. Suddenly, as I opened the door, I felt his presence closing up on me. My heart jumped, afraid he was still standing out there and we would be face-to-foot(I was still on the floor here). However, I looked.

And I saw him. This time though he was with Alana. Holding her hand. I felt like I had been slapped in the face. They were heading for the exit doors. And right before he left, Cappy turned around and stared sadly at the girl's room. I don't think he saw me, though. He slowly shook his head. And then, Cappy was gone.

I shut the door, unble to speak. My tongue was stiff as a board. Yet my brain was too caught up in the memory of Cappy and Alana holding hands. It was burned in my mind like a hot iron. Or like a scar that would eventually heal physically from doctors, yet the painful memory of that scar could never be erased like the lead of a pencil.

Suddenly, I shook my head wildly. "C'mon, Penny! Get a hold of yourself. You're gonna lose it thanks to that bastard-of-a-so-called-friend, Cappy!" I scolded myself. Besides, with Cappy and that Ana girl(or whatever her name was, I didn't really care)gone, I knew the girls were now waiting for me.

I waited until I got the feeling back in my legs for me to stand up. I looked at myself in the mirror. My blonde hair was slightly messed up from leaning on the door. I looked tired and my eyes were slightly glazed from those angry tears that wouldn't come out. Sighing deeply, I took out a pocket brush and brushed out the cowlicks of my hair. I reapplied my eyeliner, mascara and my lip gloss. I pulled out a stick of gum to brighten up my face a bit.

Finally, when I felt ready to face my sister and her friends, I stuffed everything in my pocket and opened the door. When my eyes landed on the exit doors, that horrible vision of Cappy staring back at me before leaving with Alana came back. But I shook it off and walked straight towards the girls. They were all just chatting away like nothing had happened.

Crystal was the first to see me. "Penelope!" she ran over and hugged me. "Oh thank God you didn't hang Cappy by the Exit sign!" Crystal let out a sigh of relief. "Where **were **you anyways? Putting away the rope?" Sandy teased. "Maaaybeee!" I shrugged, playing along with their joke. The girls giggled.

Then I realized that Pashmina was amiss. "Say? Where's my sister?" I looked around. "Oh. She eez buying us all tickets for Scary Movie Four." Bijou replied. "Can ya' believe it? They actually ****agreed ****on somethin' tonight!" Pepper taunted overexcitedly. The girls glared. "That won't be a problem, will it?" Sandy asked me worriedly.

Well, Cappy saw it without me. So ****I'm**** gonna see it without ****him!**** HMPH! "Sure! Scary Movie sounds ****perfect!****" I answered snootily. "Oh, great! Cause that Alana girl told us that Cappy said that you said that it was a must-watch! She said it was _super-chistoso_ and that it would totally make our night!" Crystal gushed. I almost lost it when I heard both names, but I kept control. "Really?" I fought to maintain my smile.

"Here are the tickets! One for each of us!" Pashmina came up from behind me just then, holding out six tickets. "Thanks!" we all took our individual ticket with gratitude. "Oh, hi Penny! Say, what did you and Cappy talk about back there? He seemed pretty quiet when he came back for Alana." she asked me.

My lungs shrunk. _Ohhhh sh--!_

"Oh nothing! Just about school and stuff! Don't worry, I only had the 'Kill-him!' look on my face to scare him a bit." I lied right through my teeth. Nobody seemed to notice. "Whew! Thank goodness! Cause that look freaked us ****all**** out!" Pashmina smiled. We all laughed(mine however, was forced).

"C'mon! Let's just go watch the damn movie!" Sandy said excitedly. I couldn't help but be a little anxious myself. After all, whether I had Cappy or not, I still had wanted to see this movie!

But when the movie started, I couldn't even ****concentrate ****on what the characters were saying. All I could think about was Cappy and Alana. About those two and how they must've been laughing their butts off watching the movie in this very room. Possibly in the very seats we were sitting at! Together. Next to each other.

Then, I thought about Alana's pretty little hand and how it was wrapped tightly around Cappy's when they ran out of the movie theater a few minutes ago. And the way Cappy was looking at her when I caught them walking out of the movie room.

I couldn't help but feel a pang. Why did Cappy never give ****me ****that look? He looked so happy and on top of the world when he looked at Alana. Then, it all seemed to vanish when he locked eyes with me. Course, it was cause he wasn't supposed to be caught by me. But still. What was it with Alana?

I closed my eyes and fought to erase Cappy, Alana and those images away from my mind. But they kept flying right back everytime I threw them out the door. I was overcome by a huge burden. I felt a hollow lump in my throat, but I knew better than to cry.

But that aura around Alana. It was so enchanting, almost like anyone could fall for her. Cappy, my friends, my sister. Standing next to her, I didn't feel anything for myself. I swallowed hard. I hated this.

Suddenly, the room cackled out loud. _Shit._ I thought. I had already missed three comedy scenes, all because of Cappy.

It was all his fault.

It always was.

Everyone was laughing so hard, they were too preoccupied to realize that I hadn't laughed with them. Which was good.

Because I wasn't even smiling.

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* * *

>AN: Read. Review. Done!**

I am so slow when it comes to updating.

**Crystalgurl101 **â™¥

End
file.